

Cliff Trail Conservation Area - 2010 Warrant Article

Frequently Asked Questions

Warrant Article: To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to seek grant funding to study the natural resources on Town-owned properties (Tax Map 42, Lots 04, 54, 70, 72 and Map 41, Lot 72) with the potential of placing a conservation easement on a portion of Tax Map 42, Lots 54 and 70 (located behind the Town Offices) and to accept gifts or grants from non-Town sources for this purpose, which conservation easement, if any, would require subsequent Town meeting approval



Q. What would constitute the elements of a study and what information would be forthcoming?

A. The Harpswell Conservation Commission envisions the study will locate and map the natural resources in the area, i.e. wetlands, streams, historic pathways, deeryards, cliffs, etc. This information will help determine the ecologically sensitive areas that might better be preserved for conservation. The results would be the conservation piece of a future master plan for this area.

Q. Will there be land available for other uses as well as conservation?

A. The properties mentioned cover almost 200 acres, a portion of which is very uneven with cliffs, ridges, and wetlands. A study would delineate these areas leaving the remainder available for other uses as determined by the Town's residents.

Q. Will I have another opportunity to vote on the land's use?

A. Yes, this article allows the Town to seek grant funding and accept funds to map the significant natural resource areas. The residents would be asked to approve any subsequent changes.

Q. Are there examples of other towns that have put conservation easements, held by third parties in perpetuity, on town-owned land?

A. Yes, a number of nearby towns have such easements. Freeport has four easements, Brunswick's town-owned Maquoit Bay property has an easement held by the Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust and the towns of Yarmouth, Falmouth, Cumberland and Cape Elizabeth also have easements held by a third party, many times the local land trust.

Q. What are the future costs of stewardship?

A. A stewardship plan is developed at the time of an easement's preparation and cost is determined by the easement's size and the easement holder's responsibilities. Currently, maintenance and stewardship of the Cliff Trail is been carried out by volunteers on the Recreation Committee. They might be willing to continue maintaining the trail which could lower stewardship costs. The local land trust noted the legal fees may be in the \$5-6,000 range. A fund could be set up to cover such costs or Harpswell's Land Acquisition Fund could be amended. Donations could be one way to fund stewardship.